

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday July 9th, 2023

Limerick Clare Amateur Radio Club Update

Limerick Clare Amateur Radio Club report that highlights of club activity over recent weeks included active participation in the annual Museums on the Air event over two weekends in June using the club callsign EI4SAM. This event was of particular importance given their close association with the Shannon Aviation Museum. As part of the club's engagement with the museum, school tour groups continue to be introduced to Amateur Radio at the club station located there and this has proved to be consistently popular.

The LCARC Repeater on 2m is back on the air for some time using callsign EI2REG. Located at Rooskagh near Ardagh in West Limerick, reception reports indicate that the coverage is as predicted. Based on initial feedback, the club has already made some enhancements which have ensured even greater coverage. The weekly IRTS News transmission on two metres recommenced on the repeater on Monday 3rd July at 20:00 and they ask as many people as possible to call in with reports over the coming weeks.

Nervous Novices CW Net

Led by Eamo EI7LC, the Nervous Novices CW Net is a friendly place for inexperienced operators, anyone still learning Morse, and for those who would like to have a chat using CW without feeling the pressure of a traditional QSO. This net takes place every Wednesday at 8.00 p.m. The CW net is currently active on 40m for the summer months and not 80m as previously advertised. The centre of activity is 7.035MHz. The net will likely change back to 80m in the Autumn.

VHF/UHF Field Day

Last weekend saw several field day stations part in the VHF/UHF Field Day. Well done to everyone who set up a station and got involved. Logs for this event should be submitted as soon as possible to [contestmanager /at/ irts.ie](mailto:contestmanager@irts.ie)

Contests and Events

While this weekend was busy with contests on the HF bands, attention next weekend will switch to contests on the VHF bands.

The RSGB 70MHz Trophy Contest takes place on July 15th from 14:00 to 20:00 UTC. The contest exchange is RST plus serial number and QTH locator. UK stations will send the first two letters of their postcode. The scoring mechanism is one point per kilometre multiplied by the number of countries plus postcodes. This contest runs concurrently with the 2023 IARU Region 1 70 MHz CW/SSB Contest. Entrants are encouraged to submit their log to this also.

CQ Magazine's World Wide VHF Contest takes place over next weekend also. Running from 18:00 UTC on July 15th until 21:00 UTC on July 16th, the contest promotes VHF activity on the six- and two-meter bands with participation from around the world. The objectives of this contest are for amateurs around the world to contact as many amateurs as possible in the contest period,

to promote VHF, to allow VHF operators the opportunity to experience the enhanced propagation available at this time of year, and for interested amateurs to collect VHF Maidenhead grid locators for award credits. All amateur radio frequencies on 50 MHz and 144 MHz may be used as authorized by local law and license class.

On Wednesday July 12th, you can also take part in the FT8 contest on the 70cm band from 17:00 to 21:00 UTC. The centre of activity is 432.174 MHz and it can be a very useful test of your set-up even as a SWL given the increased activity during this period. Further details can be found at www.ft8activity.eu

APRS Thursday

A reminder that every Thursday, a global net called APRSThursday takes place using Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS) for 24 hours. For any operators both old and new who may have APRS capabilities, it is a great opportunity to explore the mode and make contacts with other stations joining the net. The APRS frequency is 144.800 MHz in Europe and each week, between 300 and 500 operators take part in the net. Further information may be found at aprsph.net.

Meteor Scatter

The meteor scatter propagation mode is used by amateur radio operators to make long-distance contacts using VHF and UHF frequencies via the ionised trails left by space dust and rocks as they burn up in our atmosphere. It attracts a relatively small but dedicated group of enthusiasts around the world. The Perseids is probably the most popular and well-known meteor shower on the calendar which starts next week and peaks in mid-August. However, there are multiple other showers during the year. Right now, the build-up to the Perseids is taking place with two smaller meteor showers. A steady stream of meteors over several days can be expected but at a low rate per hour. For any operators or SWLs wishing to try this out, activity is generally best in the late night and early morning using digital modes. Even with a modest set-up, pings of activity can be detected. SWLs can also try monitoring the Graves radar for pings. This is a French radar-based space surveillance system operating on 143.050 MHz where radar reflections from meteor trail reflections can often be heard.

Sunspot Count Hits a 21 Year High

According to spaceweather.com, the average sunspot number in June 2023 has hit a 21-year high. Solar Cycle 25 has shot past its predecessor, Solar Cycle 24. This may be one a stronger cycle than what we witnessed in the 20th century. With that comes the chance of more frequent cases of HF blackouts due to flares and higher solar noise affecting the HF bands. So far, the X-class flares we've experienced this year have been relatively minor. However, we are likely to face even more powerful flares and geomagnetic storms.

Items for Inclusion in Next Week's Radio News

That is the news for this week. Items for inclusion in next week's radio news can be submitted by email to newsteam@at.irts.dot.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. The deadline is midnight on Thursday.

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